

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR PLAN FRAMEWORK



City of Reno, Nevada

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan adopted by the Regional Planning Governing Board defines a number of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Corridors within the City of Reno. In order to conform to the Regional Plan, the City's Master Plan must contain TOD Corridor Plans that further define the boundary and intended character of each of the designated TOD corridors. This document has been prepared to serve as a framework for preparing these plans, in order to ensure that they are completed in a consistent manner that achieves the objectives of the Regional Plan while recognizing the widely varying conditions along each of the corridors.

This document outlines the recommended steps in establishing a planning framework for the city as it transitions to a transit-supportive mixed-use environment along its future TOD corridors. It includes recommendations for an overall strategy approach, including the designation of high, moderate, and low priority corridors; and a framework for preparation of Corridor Plans as the implementing mechanism in the city's Master Plan.

The primary mode of transit that is to serve the TOD corridors is bus service; in the long-term, as conditions warrant, this will include implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit system along all major TOD corridors. This document should be used in conjunction with the accompanying **Best Practices Report** which discusses many of the recommended Corridor Plan components in greater detail, and provides examples of notable TOD projects and planning processes from around the country.

WHAT IS TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)?

Transit-oriented development is a pedestrian-friendly form of development that is focused around a major transit access point. Elements usually include compact, mixed use development, and facilities and design that enhance the environment for pedestrians. As defined by the Regional Plan, it would typically include moderate and high-density housing concentrated in mixed-use developments located along transit routes.

WHAT IS BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)?

BRT is a public transit mode that uses buses to provide a level of service that is similar to light rail. It can be considered as a hybrid transit service falling between traditional rail and bus modes. Depending on the design of the particular system, BRT can operate with exclusive rights of way; utilize quieter and cleaner vehicles than typical transit buses; and accommodate high-technology fare collection systems.

II. BACKGROUND

A. REGIONAL PLAN

The Truckee Meadows Regional Plan provides a sound policy foundation upon which to plan for the City of Reno's future development pattern along its primary transit corridors. Some of the key principles and policies that can help define the city's approach to planning for transit-oriented development include the following:

1. Regional Form and Pattern

The Regional Plan promotes a regional development pattern that minimizes sprawl and supports a higher intensity and density of development within transit corridors, and strongly promotes infill development within transit corridors to optimize existing infrastructure. The Regional Plan includes recommendations for minimum densities within TOD corridors, which will need to be taken into consideration as Corridor plans are developed.

2. Centers and TOD Corridors

The Regional Plan designates a series of Centers and Corridors for the City of Reno. Centers include Downtown, Regional, and Emerging Employment Centers and are considered to be areas of major significance within the region. TOD Corridors provide physical linkages between Centers and other areas of the city and will be the focus of mixed-use, transit-oriented development.

3. Infill Development

The Regional Plan gives priority to infill development within defined TOD corridors and Centers.

B. ROLE OF TOD CORRIDOR PLANS

1. Implement Regional Plan Policies

TOD corridors are intended to be implemented in a manner that accomplishes the goals of the Regional Plan, including:

- a) Incorporate transit stations at appropriate intervals;
- b) Use streetscape, urban design, and capital improvements to promote transportation by transit, walking, and bicycling;
- c) Incorporate transit improvements in cooperation with the RTC to implement near-term transit service improvements; and
- d) Provide for the long-term implementation of a bus rapid transit (BRT) system along all TOD corridors.

2. Implement City's Master Plan Policies

In addition to accomplishing the goals of the Regional Plan, the TOD Corridor Plans will also serve to reinforce the City's Master Plan policies, providing the additional detail necessary to plan to for and better anticipate future development characteristics in each corridor.

III. OVERALL APPROACH TO TOD CORRIDOR PLANS

The Regional Plan identifies a number of TOD corridors, and broadly defines priorities for their implementation (Goal 1.2 and supporting policies, *Regional Plan* pages II.B.11-13). In order to recognize the different characteristics of each corridor as a first step in the corridor planning process, it is recommended that the city further define the relative priority of these corridors, and the level of planning detail that is appropriate to each.

A. APPLY TWO-TIERED PLANNING FRAMEWORK

To maximize the effectiveness of the TOD Corridor Planning process, a two-tiered Planning Framework is recommended, as follows:

1. Develop Detailed TOD Corridor Plans for High Priority Corridors (see V. below)

Detailed TOD Corridor Plans will be geared to address more immediate development or redevelopment opportunities, existing plans, citywide objectives, and a higher existing transit frequency.

2. Distinguish between Corridors and Nodes

At the detailed TOD Corridor planning level, a distinction will need to be made between the general boundaries of each corridor and any distinct nodes of activity within it. This distinction will help provide a means of focusing planning efforts and future development within concentrated areas of each corridor where they will be most effective in demonstrating the concept of transit-oriented development to the community at large and to the local development community. In addition, it will provide a means of breaking down larger corridors, such as South Virginia Street into more manageable pieces.

a) Corridors

Corridors, as defined by the Regional Plan, refer to those areas within ¼ to ½ mile of specified transit route.

b) Nodes

Each High Priority Corridor may contain one or more "nodes" of activity that require a higher level of planning detail. Nodes should generally overlap with existing or planned transit stops and may overlap with identified Centers in the Regional Plan. In other cases, they may simply be areas where a concentrated node of activity would be desirable, or where a specific transit-oriented development opportunity exists.

3. Develop General “Framework” Plans for Low and Moderate Priority Corridors (see VI. below)

Plans for Low and Moderate Priority Corridors will serve only to “set the stage” for future transit-oriented development, acknowledging each corridor’s designation within the Regional Plan at a Master Plan level. They are intended to provide general guidance on what types of land use patterns are desirable in the interim, and how patterns will transition towards higher-intensity, transit-oriented development over time.

B. CONFIRM DESIGNATED HIERARCHY OF CORRIDORS

Based on discussions with City and Regional planning staff, each of the TOD Corridors has been assigned a priority status ranging from high (1-5 years) to low (10-20 years). This prioritization reflects the more broadly defined categories contained in the Regional Plan, but also takes into account existing plans, recent development activity, market constraints, and other factors that will play a significant role in the implementation of the TOD Corridor Plans.

1. High priority corridors (1-5 years):

- a) South Virginia Street (Downtown Reno Center to Meadowood Center)
- b) 4th Street East (Downtown Reno Center to Downtown Sparks Center)
- c) Mill Street/Washoe Center (Downtown Reno Center to Reno-Tahoe Airport Center)
- d) South Virginia Street (Meadowood Center to Redfield Center)

2. Moderate priority corridors (5-10 years):

- a) North Virginia Street (Downtown Reno Center to North McCarran Blvd.)
- b) 4th Street West (Downtown Reno Center to West McCarran Blvd.)

3. Low priority corridors (10-20+ years):

- a) North Virginia Street (North McCarran Blvd. to Stead Center)
- b) 4th Street West (McCarran Blvd. to I-80)

IV. TOD CORRIDOR PLAN PROCESS

Corridor Plans are intended to be used as the primary means of defining and implementing the city’s vision for each of the future transit corridors. It is at this stage that the unique characteristics of each corridor will need to be clearly identified so that the specific approach to developing the Corridor Plan and its desired contents can be appropriately tailored. The following outlines the steps to be taken in preparing each of the Corridor Plans.

A. DEVELOP A WORK PLAN FOR HIGH PRIORITY CORRIDORS

1. **Define corridor boundary** – define the boundary of the planning area for the corridor, based on the following factors:
 - a) Existing development/ownership patterns
 - b) Neighborhood context
 - c) Location of planned transit stops
 - d) Identification of nodes where more detailed planning may be necessary
2. **Identify key stakeholders** – identify key stakeholders who may need to be involved in the planning process. This may include property owners and residents, businesses, neighborhood residents and representatives of neighborhood organizations, and other potentially affected parties.
3. **Evaluate need for Advisory Committee** – determine whether it is appropriate to form an Advisory Committee to participate in the planning process. Factors to consider include the number of stakeholders, degree of potential change and/or controversy within the corridor, and resources available for the planning process.
4. **Develop detailed work plan tailored to each corridor** (see V. below) - although the general approach for preparing each of the plans should be consistent, each corridor may have unique circumstances that affect how the plan is to be prepared.

B. DETERMINE FRAMEWORK PLAN REQUIREMENTS FOR MODERATE AND LOW PRIORITY CORRIDORS

1. **Define corridor boundary**
 - a) Existing development/ownership patterns
 - b) Neighborhood context
2. **Determine other requirements related to moderate and low-priority corridors**
 - a) Phasing requirements to allow for future intensification
 - b) Establish triggers for more detailed plan preparation

V. TOD CORRIDOR PLAN CONTENTS (FOR HIGH PRIORITY CORRIDORS)

Many of the specific components identified below are consistent with those typically prepared for most planning efforts within the City and should be addressed accordingly. However, where an approach should vary within the context of the TOD Corridor Plans, or is intended to go beyond what would typically be addressed, additional discussion is provided. Note that in some instances, it may not be necessary to include all materials prepared during the planning process in the final Corridor Plan. For example, much of the Inventory and Analysis materials could be included in a summary form in the plan, or included as a technical appendix.

A. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

An inventory of existing conditions within and adjacent to the corridor will help define opportunities and constraints that will need to be addressed within the Corridor Plan. In addition to informing the creation of the Plan, the Existing Conditions Inventory will also serve as a tool for the identification of priority development areas and infrastructure improvements for the transit corridor as a whole. The following elements should be considered and included in the Plan on an as-needed basis:

1. **Existing Land Use**
2. **Zoning**
3. **Ownership**
4. **Infrastructure Assessment**
 - a) Existing capacity
 - b) Planned improvements
5. **Population and Employment Projections**
6. **Relationship to Master Plan/Regional Plan**
7. **Economic and Market Considerations** - In most cases, a general survey of local and regional market conditions will be sufficient for development concepts; however, more detailed concepts (or those that involve a public/private partnership) may warrant a more thorough market analysis.

B. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

A key component of each Small Area Plan should be a concept plan that defines the desired land use pattern, mix, and intensity of uses for the corridor. The level of detail appropriate for development concepts will vary from corridor to corridor, as well as for activity nodes within individual corridors depending upon the number and location of nodes identified as part of the Plan Process in IV. For example, a more general development concept would be appropriate along the length of the corridor (similar to those prepared for the Centers identified in the Regional Plan), with more detailed concepts for the nodes. The following included in the Plan:

1. **Land Use**
2. **Transportation**
3. **Urban Design**

C. POLICIES

Discussion and examples provided in the accompanying Best Practices report should serve as a tool for the development of policies in each of the following areas. Policies may need to be provided at two levels to support each of the development concepts developed as part of B, above: 1) a broader, corridor-wide level and 2) a more detailed, node-specific level. The following policies should be considered and included in the Plan on an as-needed basis:

- 1. Identity/Character**
- 2. Infrastructure**
- 3. Street Patterns/Connectivity**
- 4. Transit**
 - a) Pedestrian
 - b) Vehicle
- 5. Parking**
 - a) Location
 - b) Design/layout
 - c) Quantity
- 6. Land Use**
 - a) Mix of Uses
 - b) Neighborhoods (boundaries/transitions)
 - c) Development intensity/density
 - d) Permitted/prohibited uses
- 7. Public Space and Greenways**

D. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Appropriate implementation strategies should be identified as part of the Corridor Plan development process and should be tailored to suit each. The need for and use of each of these tools will vary by corridor. A more detailed discussion of each, as well as links to examples from other communities is provided in the accompanying Best Practices report. The following strategies should be considered and included in the Plan on an as-needed basis:

- 1. Zoning/Design Standards (Overlay District)**
- 2. Development phasing**
- 3. Incentives**
 - a) Redevelopment financing
 - b) Administrative streamlining
 - c) Parking requirements
 - d) RPC Conformity Review, including pre-certification for Projects of Regional Significance

4. Public/Private Partnerships

VI. FRAMEWORK PLAN REQUIREMENTS (FOR MODERATE AND LOW PRIORITY CORRIDORS)

As described above, Corridor Plans for Low and Moderate Priority Corridors will be addressed at a much more general and cursory level than the High Priority Corridors, serving only to “set the stage” for future transit-oriented development. The Framework Plans should acknowledge each corridor’s designation within the Regional Plan at a Master Plan level, and provide general guidance on what types of land use patterns are desirable in the interim as well as how patterns will transition towards higher-intensity, transit-oriented development over time.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Boundary
2. Relationship to Other Plans
3. Need for the Corridor Plan

B. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Development Concepts for Low and Moderate Priority Corridors will be addressed at a broad, corridor-wide level, with no emphasis on particular nodes within the corridor.

1. Land Use
2. Transportation
3. Urban Design

C. SPECIAL CONDITIONS OR OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Low and Moderate Priority Corridor Plans need to provide a mechanism to ensure that development that occurs in Low and Moderate Priority Corridors in the interim does not preclude more intensive, transit-oriented development from occurring in the future. Some of these mechanisms will be set in place as part of the Corridor Plan. However, others will need to be incorporated as part of the development review process for development proposals submitted within each corridor. The following strategies should be considered and included in the Plan on an as-needed basis:

1. Phasing considerations (to allow for intensification over time)

Corridor Plans will need to provide a clear expectation that development that occur within Low and Moderate Priority Corridors should be accompanied by a phasing plan that demonstrates where and how intensification of the site could occur in the future. In addition, larger properties will need to demonstrate that the property has been planned in a manner that would not hinder future intensification, such as a large retail center with multiple pad sites. In such instances, the development plan should be carefully reviewed to ensure that it provides for good connectivity between parcels and/or building pads; that the subdivision of parcels does not preclude future intensification; and that the covenants, standards and restrictions do not preclude the redevelopment of surface parking areas.

2. Triggers for detailed TOD Corridor Plan requirement

While it is anticipated that some level of low-density development will continue to occur in Low and Moderate Priority Corridors, there are a number of scenarios that could potentially occur in any of the corridor that would warrant a more detailed planning effort—most likely in the form of a change in the corridor's priority status and the completion of a High Priority TOD Corridor Plan in accordance with Section V. above. Potential triggers to be included in a Framework Plan might include:

- a) Change in existing transit frequency or a change in timing of BRT implementation;
- b) Increase in intensity/density of development submittals indicating a market for transit-oriented development;
- c) Increase in average daily trips (ADT) within corridor that warrant consideration of increased transit frequencies; or
- d) Developer initiated request for more detailed planning as a result of a public/private development partnership or preliminary development concept.